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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Date: September 7, 2016

Minnesota Project SEARCH Honored as Community Innovator

Minnesota Project SEARCH will receive the Community Innovator Award from The Arc Minnesota. Representatives of the project will accept the award at The Arc Minnesota's Awards Banquet on Friday evening, September 23, 2016 at the Shoreview Community Center in Shoreview, Minnesota.

Project SEARCH was introduced in Minnesota in 2007. Individuals from the Anoka Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) and Medtronic, Inc. partnered to launch the first Minnesota Project SEARCH site in December 2009. Today, there are seven Project SEARCH sites: Medtronic, Fairview Lakes Medical Center, Children's Minnesota, Hennepin County Medical Center, Avera Health, and Mayo Clinic. The State of Minnesota will start a Project SEARCH site this fall.

The Minnesota Project SEARCH sites have created strong partnerships and collaborations among state agencies and local counterparts that prepare students with disabilities to become part of Minnesota's workforce talent pool. The Department of Employment Economic Development/ Vocational Rehabilitation Services/State Services for the Blind, Department of Human Services/ Disability Services Division, and Minnesota Department of Education/Special Education Division help ensure each location implements the program according to the Project SEARCH model. These agencies work in cooperation with the Project SEARCH instructors, host business liaisons, managers and supervisors, vocational rehabilitation managers and counselors, special education personnel, county supervisors, case managers, and local community rehabilitation providers.

Minnesota Project SEARCH program has shown positive results in preparing students with disabilities to be ready for competitive employment. According to Minnesota Department of Education data from May, 2016, 74.3% of the student interns who complete the program find competitive employment within six months after graduation.

The Arc Minnesota's September 23rd banquet honoring Minnesota Project SEARCH will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the Shoreview Community Center, 4580 Victoria Street North in Shoreview,

For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Minnesota. You can order tickets for the event by contacting Mike Gude at 651-604-8066 or mikeg@arcmn.org.

The Community Innovator Award honors an individual, organization, or business that has developed a unique program, service or idea that increased the community inclusion or self-determination of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

The Arc Minnesota's Awards Banquet is part of the organization's annual state conference. This year's conference, "The Power of Community: Connections That Transform Lives," is also being held at the Shoreview Community Center on Saturday, September 24, 2016. The all-day event will include workshops on best practices, success stories, and one-on-one assistance and advice to help people with disabilities become more fully included in their community. The conference is geared to people with disabilities, their family members, and direct care staff who support them. For more information, go to www.arcmn.org/state-conference-2016

The Arc Minnesota is a statewide, non-profit organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. It is supported by members, partners, and 10 affiliated chapters statewide. For more information, go to www.arcmn.org

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